

Improving: Services to protect children

How good are we at
sharing and recording information
to help children and families?

How good can we be?



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1. INTRODUCTION

This guide to self-evaluation and improvement builds upon the advice given in the publication *How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?*¹ (A summary of the quality indicators from that publication is reproduced in Appendix I). Services and professionals working within a local authority area who have responsibilities for protecting children² from abuse and neglect can use this guide to help self-evaluate and improve the services provided. The guide helps users to recognise *How good are we now?* and identify what needs to be done to decide *How good can we be?*.

All professionals who come into contact with children are responsible for recognising when they are suffering or may be at risk of suffering harm. This guide should be used to help evaluate how well information is recorded and shared. It is designed to be used by front-line practitioners and managers such as social workers, public health nurses, police officers, teachers and other people working with children and families. In child protection, the process of self-evaluation and improvement requires both an assessment of how well each service is doing and how effectively services are working together to protect children. Major enquiries provide powerful evidence of the risks to children where information is not effectively shared. This guide can be used within a single service as well as at inter-agency level across services, for example, by a local child protection committee.

In order to protect children better, the guide focuses on **improving communication and arrangements for sharing and recording information**. It stresses the importance of partnership with parents, carers, and children. Quality partnerships between professionals, services, and with parents and children can assist in good sharing and recording of information. The guide is aimed at staff with varied levels of experience in self-evaluation including those who are not yet familiar with self-evaluation processes. Self-evaluation, within the overall process of planning for improvement and excellence, helps identify current good practice and positive impacts, and identify areas for further development. The templates of self-evaluation questions contained later in this guide have been prepared to assist in recording the assessment of strengths and areas for improvement.

The successful sharing of information to protect children can be a complex process involving two or more parties. This guide aims to support staff to look at their practice when they need to:

- ✧ be alert to signs of abuse and **recognise** that a child needs help;
- ✧ **refer** and communicate concerns within and between services; and
- ✧ **respond** to indications that a child may be in need of protection.

¹ 'How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?' Self-evaluation using quality indicators, HM Inspectorate of Education 2005. <http://www.hmie.gov/documents/publications/hwcpnm.pdf>

² The term 'children' is used throughout this guide to refer to children under the age of 16 years or for young people between the ages of 16 and 18 years for whom services hold a statutory responsibility.

2. SELF-EVALUATION FOR IMPROVEMENT

- ✦ encourages staff, at all levels, to reflect upon practice and identify the strengths and areas for improvement;
- ✦ recognises the work staff are doing which has a positive effect on the lives of children, young people and their families;
- ✦ identifies processes and systems which need to be maintained or where improvement is needed; and
- ✦ allows services to inform stakeholders about the quality of services to protect children in the area.

When we self-evaluate, we look honestly but critically at our practice and at the services we provide with a view to improvement. Put simply, self-evaluation for improvement broadly focuses on answering two key questions about our practice:

How good are we now?

This helps us to identify our strengths and development needs in key aspects of our work and the impact our work has on children's safety.

and

How good can we be?

We ask this question to help us set priorities for improvement.

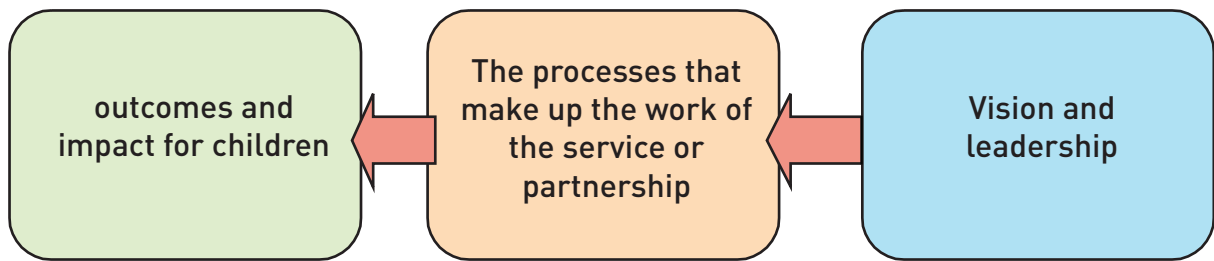
Self-evaluation, to be meaningful, has to focus on ongoing improvements to practice. It is not a one-off activity which is done for its own sake. It is a dynamic process which goes on throughout the year. We can use self-evaluation to establish a baseline from which to plan to improve outcomes for children. We can use self-evaluation as a means of ensuring our stakeholders' commitment to set priorities and change. After we have taken planned action, ongoing self-evaluation helps us to monitor our progress and determine impact.

The eighteen quality indicators (QIs) in *How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?* cover the key aspects of the work of services involved in protecting children from harm. Each indicator contains illustrations which describe very good and weak practice. We can use these illustrations to check the quality of our own services³.

The QIs can be viewed as a three part model consisting of three inter-related areas:

- ✦ the vision and leadership of the service;
- ✦ the processes that make up the work of the service; and
- ✦ the outcomes and impacts the service wants to have on the lives of children.

³ Throughout this document the term 'service' can be taken to mean one individual service or a partnership made up of more than one service.

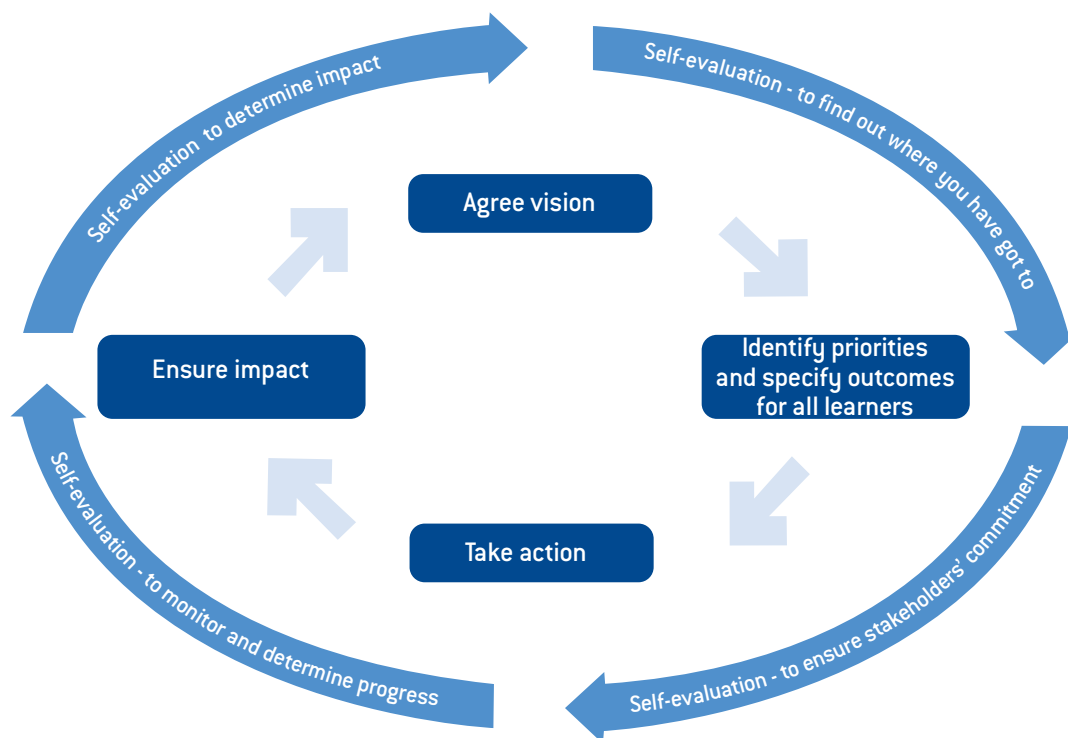


The **vision** which we have for our service should set out our view of what we hope to achieve for children. Our vision needs to link appropriately with the vision for set out in the purposes for the curriculum 3-18 that children should be *successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors*. In order to achieve these, children need to be *nurtured, safe, active, healthy, achieving, included, respected and responsible*. As part of self-evaluation, we need to be aware that our vision is the main driver for our work. However, it is not necessary to evaluate our vision on a regular basis. It should be sufficient to check annually that we have a shared vision of the kind of service we aim to provide to children and the wider community.

The starting point in self-evaluation is to ask *How good are we now?* and consider the **outcomes and impact** which our service has on children and their families. To do this we should think about cases where recording and sharing of information has helped to meet children's needs and any cases where it has not. We should also look closely at the illustrations in selected QIs from *How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?*. We need to evaluate the **direct** outcomes on children and families rather than indirect outcomes such as the policies, procedures or other materials which we have developed. Developing policies and procedures may be useful, but they are means to more important ends: improvements in keeping children safe and meeting their needs. We should then look at aspects of our work and the processes we use to achieve the outcomes and impacts we want for children and their families. In order to do this, we should select key QIs from the **processes that make up the work of our service** in the model above. By asking the question, *How good are we now?* we can identify strengths and areas which we need to improve or develop further.

Improvement should be central to our self-evaluation. By asking *How good can we be?* we can set goals for improvement.

This diagram shows how self-evaluation contributes to **planning for improvement**.



An **improvement plan** will have:

- ✦ A small number of **improvement priorities** which focus on improvements for children and young people and are **observable and measurable**.
- ✦ Clearly identified **responsibilities** for implementation linked to named individuals and/or teams.
- ✦ Clear **timescales** with milestones and deadlines.
- ✦ **Measures of success** which include performance data, quality indicators and stakeholders' views.

Self-evaluation is a continuous process which we can use throughout improvement planning. We should use it to check our starting point and identify what we need to do. We should then use it to monitor our progress. And we can use self-evaluation to check out the impact of the action we have taken on the lives of children and young people.

3. HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide uses a suite of QIs which have been selected from *How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?* to help us focus on, and improve **sharing and recording information to protect children**.

By answering the question *How good are we now?* and considering the illustrations in the chosen QIs we can identify our strengths and areas for improvement. This is key to knowing if we are doing the right things, at the right time, and, in the right way in order that all children are safe and their needs met. The answer to *How good are we now?* will help us to see what is working well and where we need to take steps to improve. We can then take action and monitor and determine our progress. The answer to the question *How good can we be?* will help us to check our vision in relation to the overall vision for Scotland's children and set achievable but aspirational priorities for improvement.

Effective self-evaluation is dependent upon gathering evidence from a range of sources. When gathering evidence about how well **information is recorded and shared** we need to consider how well we:

- ✦ provide information to others;
- ✦ receive and manage information; and
- ✦ manage and act upon the information we are given.

It is important that we have sound evidence to inform the judgements we make. We should use a wide range of evidence to help us to evaluate how we are doing. The evidence we use could include:

- ✦ **performance data** collected nationally, locally or within a service;
- ✦ surveys of **stakeholders' views**;
- ✦ **direct observation** of practice; and
- ✦ review of **a range of documentation**.



We should ask the questions *How good are we now?* and *How good can we be?* in relation to each of the QIs below.

First, we should identify our priorities and the specific key **outcomes** which we aim to achieve for children.

QIs which are useful in identifying the outcomes for children and for the community are:

- 1.2 Children and young people benefit from strategies to minimise harm
- 1.3 Children are helped by the actions taken in immediate response to concerns

Then, we should identify **the processes** in relation to **sharing and recording information** which we need to look at more closely in order to improve the outcomes for children.

QIs which are useful to look at are:

- 2.1 Public Awareness of the safety and protection of children and young people
- 3.2 Information sharing and recording
- 3.3 Recognising and assessing risks and needs
- 4.5 Development of staff

4. SELF-EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The following pages contain selected indicators from *How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?*. This section consists of key questions which we can use to evaluate the quality of **sharing and recording information to help children and families**. Each page sets out some questions and signposts to good practice in relation to the quality indicator. There is space to record strengths, areas for development and to set priorities for the future. After recording these strengths and areas for development, it is important that we prioritise the key aspects that need to be developed. These, and the actions taken to realise them, will form our **action plan** for improvement.

This table provides a summary of the quality indicators we want to consider. Next to each indicator there is a key question that we should consider in relation to **sharing and recording information to protect children**. The table can be used to record a summary of the overall evaluation for each QI and proposed action⁴.

Quality Indicator	Key question	Evaluation 1-6	Priorities for Action
1.2 Children and young people benefit from strategies to minimise harm	How well do we recognise when a child needs help?		
1.3 Children are helped by the actions taken in immediate response to concerns	How well do we keep children and families informed about actions that are taken?		
2.1 Public Awareness of the safety and protection of children and young people	How well do we keep people who raise concerns about children informed?		
3.2 Information sharing and recording	How well do we share information to protect children from harm? How good are we at ensuring a shared understanding of information? How good are our recording systems?		
3.3 Recognising and assessing risks and needs	How well do we review and analyse information and significant events?		
4.5 Development of staff	How competent are we at sharing and recording information?		

⁴ See Appendix II: The six-point self-evaluation scale.

Quality Indicator 1.2: Children benefit from strategies to minimise harm

- ✦ Support for vulnerable children, young people and families
- ✦ Children's and young people's awareness of keeping themselves safe

Questions you should ask in relation to this QI:

- ✦ How well do we recognise the signs that tell us that a child needs help?
 - ✦ How supportive is the culture in which we work?
 - ✦ How well do we take account of racial and cultural diversity?
 - ✦ How well do we understand the needs of very young children and children who communicate in different ways?

Signposts to very good practice

All professionals who have contact with children, young people or families are alert to and recognise the signs that children or young people may need help or protection from harm. This includes professionals who do not have a direct responsibility for children, such as those working with the adults in a family.

All children and young people's concerns are treated seriously and respectfully by the person hearing them. Professionals act to ensure that children and young people receive help even if family members are unable or unwilling to accept help on their behalf.

Where children are too young or too disabled to communicate their feelings and views, professionals are sensitive to and seek to understand any changes in their health, behaviour or emotional well-being.

How good are we now?

What evidence do we have of our strengths and areas for development?

How good can we be?

What action will we take to improve current practice?

Example of working practices which led to positive action:

Staff in schools realised that the outcomes from multi-agency meetings could be more effective if they included a wider range of partners. They encouraged greater participation and attendance from school nurses, social workers, campus police officers and youth workers. The extent and scope of the information shared at these expanded meetings resulted in earlier identification of children at risk.

Quality Indicator 1.3:

Children are helped by the actions taken in immediate response to concerns

- ✳ Professionals' initial response to children, young people and families who need help

Questions you should ask in relation to this QI:

- ✳ How well do we keep children and families informed about actions that are taken?
 - ✳ Are we clear about whose job is it to keep the child and family informed and do children and families know who this is?
 - ✳ How good is our communication with children and families?
 - ✳ How well do we identify who should/should not be informed?
 - ✳ How well do we identify what information should/should not be shared?

Signposts to very good practice

Children and young people know what is going to happen next and why. They are aware of any immediate help that will be provided and they do not feel that help has been delayed inappropriately. Children and young people are kept informed about any further enquiries, investigations or criminal proceedings and they understand the reasons and implications for themselves and others.

Children, young people or family members with learning or communication difficulties, or for whom English is not their first language are helped to understand as much as possible about what is happening to them. When concerns have been raised by another person, either a professional or another adult who knows the child or young person's circumstances, the child or young person concerned knows the nature of the concerns and is given a suitable opportunity to respond.

Children and young people are kept informed about any further enquiries, investigations or criminal proceedings and they understand the reasons and implications for themselves and others.

How good are we now?

What evidence do we have of our strengths and areas for development?

How good can we be?

What action will we take to improve current practice?

Example of working practices which led to positive action:

Police officers and social workers sought to provide better information to parents and children during child protection investigations. They developed a set of leaflets which explained the legal framework, the roles of staff carrying out the investigation, what would happen during an investigation and what was likely to happen next. Parents and children were given the name and contact details of one person to whom they could address questions at any time.

Quality Indicator 2.1:**Public Awareness of the safety and protection of children and young people**

- ✦ Confidence in public services
- ✦ Responses to concerns raised by members of the public about a child's or young person's safety or welfare

Questions you should ask in relation to this QI:

- ✦ How well do we let people know how to raise concerns about children?
 - ✦ How well do staff who receive initial referrals obtain and record the relevant information?
 - ✦ How good is our feedback to: staff in our own service; staff in other services; members of the public?
 - ✦ How well do we balance the need for confidentiality and the sharing of information?

Signposts to very good practice

The receiving agency or professional takes referrals seriously, notes the details accurately and passes the information on to someone who can find out more about the situation and take any necessary action.

There is a consistent response to calls about children at risk of harm whenever the call is made, whether the call is from a professional or a member of the public. The person raising the concern is provided with feedback as appropriate and a record made of any feedback given.

Professionals have a sound understanding of the relevant legal framework regarding confidentiality and information sharing and act in accordance with it.

How good are we now?

What evidence do we have of our strengths and areas for development?

How good can we be?

What action will we take to improve current practice?

Example of working practices which led to positive action:

Services recognised the need to provide a consistent response to all members of the public who reported concerns about children. Staff developed a standard letter to provide a formal acknowledgement of their referral. This included details of all points of contact should they wish to report further concerns.

Quality Indicator 3.2

Information sharing and recording

- ✦ Appropriate sharing of information

Questions you should ask in relation to this QI:

- ✦ How well do we share information to protect children from harm?
 - ✦ How well do we identify what information should be shared, with whom and in what form?
 - ✦ How well do we share information about adults who pose a risk to children?
 - ✦ How well do we make clear the difference between fact and opinion?
 - ✦ How well do we comply with the legal framework for sharing information?
 - ✦ How effective are our policies, procedures, guidance in promoting effective information-sharing?

Signposts to very good practice

Professionals clearly understand when they need to share information about children, young people and their families and they regularly share and are proactive in seeking information in order to protect children and young people from harm. They share information which is relevant to the immediate, short- and long-term needs of children and young people. Professionals have clear guidance from their agency to assist them to confidently share information. Professionals are alert to individuals who may present risks to children and are aware of the need, and their statutory responsibility to share information without delay about adults who may present a risk to children. The roles, responsibilities and constraints of professionals in different services are clearly understood. Professionals have a sound understanding of the impact of adults' behaviour on children and are aware that working closely with other agencies will help to minimise risk.

There are clear protocols for sharing information within and across agencies, between those professionals working with adults and those working with children and young people. Professionals share information which is relevant to the immediate, short- and long-term needs of children and young people.

How good are we now?

What evidence do we have of our strengths and areas for development?

How good can we be?

What action will we take to improve current practice?

Example of working practices which led to positive action:

Services worked together to develop a multi-agency framework for the sharing of information about children affected by domestic violence. The range of professionals who received and provided information was expanded. This ensured that all relevant services, including health visitors and schools nurses and school staff, in contact with the child were informed and in a better position to respond to their individual needs.

Quality Indicator 3.2

Information sharing and recording

- ✱ Joint understanding of information

Questions you should ask in relation to this QI:

- ✱ How good are we at ensuring a shared understanding of information?
 - ✱ How good are we at gathering information from all relevant sources?
 - ✱ How clear are we about the roles and responsibilities of ourselves and others?
 - ✱ How effective are our professional relationships (within our own agency, and between and across agencies)?

Signposts to very good practice

Professionals who are gathering information in order to assess the risks to and needs of a child or young person, ensure that they seek information from all relevant sources, including professionals who may be involved with other family members.

When approaching other sources to request information to protect children and young persons from harm, professionals ensure that the significance of their request is fully understood by those they are approaching. They ensure that the quality and detail of the information which they are given is sufficient for the intended purpose.

If a concern is raised about a child or young person that requires further exploration, all professionals involved have the skills to gather pertinent information.

When information is shared, the professional communicating the information ensures that the recipient has fully understood the significance of the information, makes clear what is fact and what is opinion and ensures there is agreement about expected actions.

How good are we now?

What evidence do we have of our strengths and areas for development?

How good can we be?

What action will we take to improve current practice?

Example of working practices which led to positive action:

Staff in health, social work, education and police were responsible for gathering and sharing all relevant information about the child and their family when there were concerns about children. This included information about their personal involvement with the family as well other sources within their wider service. Historical information and information from previous providers in other areas where the child and family had resided were also sought. For example, public health nurses were involved in obtaining and passing on information about previous contact from specialist and therapeutic services.

Quality Indicator 3.2

Information sharing and recording

✦ Management and recording of information

Questions you should ask in relation to this QI:

- ✦ How good are our recording systems?
 - ✦ Have we a standard system for recording and retrieving information?
 - ✦ How well do we ensure that information is clearly recorded and retrieved when required?
 - ✦ How well do we comply with our professional standards and legal frameworks?
 - ✦ How good are our arrangements for obtaining and recording consent to share information?
 - ✦ How well do we explain consent to children and families?
 - ✦ How well do we inform children and families about the information we hold about them?

Signposts to very good practice

Agencies have in place robust procedures governing the recording and handling of personal information. These ensure that information recorded by individual workers is accurate and succinct and that parents, children and families are aware of what information is held about them and of who will have access to this information.

Professionals ensure that children, young people and families are aware of what information is held about them.

Records, in all agencies, include a chronology of events and contacts which assist professionals to understand key events in children's and young people's lives. Records identify roles and responsibilities. Decisions and the reasons for them are clearly recorded. There are clear protocols within the agency for managing the interface between electronic and manual records.

Information is stored securely but is readily accessible to those who have a right of access. Procedures are in place for storage, retrieval and retention and disclosure of information, in line with relevant legislation. These procedures are followed.

Where there are arrangements for sharing files or electronic systems, there are clear protocols in place which are understood and followed by all professionals, including professionals who are managing data bases.

There are clear guidelines and protocols for identifying what information parents, children and young people are content to share freely.

<i>How good are we now?</i> What evidence do we have of our strengths and areas for development?	<i>How good can we be?</i> What action will we take to improve current practice?

Example of working practices which led to positive action:

To improve the arrangements for obtaining consent to share information across services, staff developed a standard procedure across services to obtain the written consent of families to share information. This was also used by staff working directly with parents (e.g. substance misuse workers).

Quality Indicator 3.3

Recognising and assessing risks and needs

- ✦ Initial information-gathering and investigation

Questions you should ask in relation to this QI:

- ✦ How well do we review and analyse information and significant events?
 - ✦ How well do we look critically at the information we record and recognise patterns of events and accumulation of concerns?
 - ✦ How well do we prepare and share chronologies for individual children?

Signposts to very good practice

Records are regularly monitored and reviewed by managers or others with a responsibility for quality assurance.

There are well-defined procedures for regularly reviewing the work undertaken to protect children and meet their needs.

In each record there is an accurate and up to date chronology of significant events and contacts.

There is a systematic approach to identifying, analysing and acting upon patterns or accumulations of concerns, which takes account of information held by other agencies.

How good are we now?

What evidence do we have of our strengths and areas for development?

How good can we be?

What action will we take to improve current practice?

Example of working practices which led to positive action:

Staff who were members of child protection core groups working with children on the child protection register worked together to prepare integrated chronologies of significant events. In doing so, staff were able to share important information known only to their service about the child and family members, and assess the significance of this information.

Quality Indicator 4.5

Development of staff

- ✦ Professional competence and confidence
- ✦ Staff development and training

Questions you should ask in relation to this QI:

- ✦ How effectively do we receive the training and skills we need?
 - ⊗ How effective is the advice and support we get when we need it to ensure effective sharing and recording of information?

Signposts to very good practice

Professionals exercise appropriate initiative and professional judgement. Help and advice are available to them when needed.

Managers in all agencies, through appropriate arrangements for staff appraisal, ensure that professionals working with young children are competent and confident in carrying out their work. They ensure that professionals have appropriate knowledge, skills, experience and qualifications.

Managers ensure that their staff keep up to date with relevant legislation, research and good practice as appropriate.

Agencies, individually and jointly, audit the training needs of staff and plan a coherent and progressive training programme to meet the needs of the workforce and the organisation.

Induction processes and training for all staff address child protection issues and following induction staff are clear about their responsibilities in relation to protecting children.

How good are we now?

What evidence do we have of our strengths and areas for development?

How good can we be?

What action will we take to improve current practice?

Example of working practices which led to positive action:

An evaluation of staff development activities was undertaken to demonstrate the effectiveness of inter-agency training on the use of a new information-sharing protocol. The results showed an increase in the confidence of staff in sharing information about children and their families. It also demonstrated a greater contribution to early sharing of information during child protection meetings.

APPENDIX I

A SUMMARY OF THE QUALITY INDICATORS

In *How well are children and young people protected and their needs met?* a suite of eighteen quality indicators are arranged around a set of five key questions:

- ✧ How effective is the help children and young people get when they need it?
- ✧ How effectively do agencies and the community work together to keep children and young people safe?
- ✧ How good is the delivery of key processes?
- ✧ How good is operational management in protecting children and young people and meeting their needs?
- ✧ How good is individual and strategic leadership?

Each quality indicator is accompanied by illustrations which describe practice which is *very good* and practice which is *weak*.

Number	Quality indicator	Themes
<i>1) How effective is the help children and young people get when they need it?</i>		
1.1	Children and young people are listened to, understood and respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Trust
1.2	Children and young people benefit from strategies to minimise harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for vulnerable children, young people and families • Children's and young people's awareness of keeping themselves safe
1.3	Children and young people are helped by the actions taken in immediate response to concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionals' initial response to children, young people, young people and families who need help
1.4	Children's and young people's needs are met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting needs • Reducing the longer-term effects of abuse or neglect
<i>2) How effectively do agencies and the community work together to keep children and young people safe?</i>		
2.1	Public awareness of the safety and protection of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence of the public in services • Responses to concerns raised about a child's or young person's safety or welfare

<i>Number</i>	<i>Quality indicator</i>	<i>Themes</i>
<i>3) How good is the delivery of key processes?</i>		
3.1	Involving children, young people and their families in key processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping children, young people and their families informed and involved • Addressing dissatisfaction and complaints
3.2	Information sharing and recording	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate sharing of information • Joint understanding of information • Management and recording information
3.3	Recognising and assessing risks and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising a child or young person needs help • Initial information gathering and investigation • Assessment of risks and needs
3.4	Effectiveness of planning to meet needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision making, identifying responsibilities and meeting needs • Taking account of changing circumstances
<i>4) How good is operational management in protecting children and young people and meeting their needs?</i>		
4.1	Policies and procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range and framework of policies and link to vision, values and aims • Managing, disseminating, evaluating and updating policies
4.2	Operational planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management and the planning framework • Development and use of management information
4.3	Participation of children, young people, families and other relevant people in policy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking views of children, young people and families • Involving children, young people and families in developing services

<i>Number</i>	<i>Quality indicator</i>	<i>Themes</i>
<i>4) How good is operational management in protecting children and young people and meeting their needs?</i>		
4.4	Recruitment and retention of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and meeting human resource needs Safe recruitment and retention practice
4.5	Development of staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional competence and confidence Staff development and training
<i>5) How good is individual and collective strategic leadership?</i>		
5.1	Values, vision and aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of vision and values Appropriateness and clarity of aims Promotion of positive attitudes to social and cultural diversity
5.2	Leadership and direction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint leadership within and across agencies Strategic deployment of resources
5.3	Leadership of people and partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships with staff and development of teamwork across agencies Promotion of collaborative ethos
5.4	Leadership of change and improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and development Building capacity for improvement

APPENDIX II

THE SIX-POINT SELF-EVALUATION SCALE

Excellent

An evaluation of *excellent* will apply to performance which is a model of its type. The outcomes for children, young people and their families along with their experience of services will be of a very high quality. An evaluation of *excellent* will represent an outstanding standard of performance, which will exemplify very best practice and will be worth disseminating beyond the service or area. It will imply these very high levels of performance are sustainable and will be maintained.

Very good

An evaluation of *very good* will apply to performance characterised by major strengths. There will be very few areas for improvement and any that do exist will not significantly diminish the experience of children, young people or their families. While an evaluation of *very good* will represent a high standard of performance, it is a standard that should be achievable by all. It will imply that it is fully appropriate to continue the delivery of service without significant adjustment. However, there will be an expectation that professionals will take opportunities to improve and strive to raise performance to excellent.

Good

An evaluation of *good* will apply to performance characterised by major strengths which taken together clearly outweigh any areas for improvement. An evaluation of *good* will represent a standard of performance in which the strengths have a significant positive impact. However, the quality of outcomes and experiences of children, young people and their families will be diminished in some way by aspects where improvement is required. It will imply that the services should seek to improve further the areas of important strength but take action to address the areas for improvement.

Adequate

An evaluation of *adequate* will apply to performance characterised by strengths which just outweigh weaknesses. An evaluation of *adequate* will indicate that children, young people and their families have access to a basic level of service. It represents a standard where the strengths have a positive impact on the experiences of children, young people and families. However, while the weaknesses will not be important enough to have a substantially adverse impact, they will constrain the overall quality of outcomes and experiences. It will imply that professionals should take action to address areas of weakness while building on its strengths.

Weak

An evaluation of *weak* will apply to performance, which has some strengths, but where there will be important weaknesses. In general, an evaluation of *weak* may be arrived at in a number of circumstances. While there may be some strengths, the important weaknesses, either individually or collectively, are sufficient to diminish the experiences of children young people and their families in substantial ways. It may imply that some children and young people may be left at risk or their needs not met unless action is taken. It will imply the need for structured and planned action on the part of the agencies involved.

Unsatisfactory

An evaluation of *unsatisfactory* will apply when there are major weaknesses in performance in critical aspects requiring remedial action. The outcomes and experiences of children, young people and their families will be at risk in significant respects. In almost all cases, professionals responsible for provision evaluated as *unsatisfactory* will require support from senior managers in planning and carrying out the necessary actions to effect improvement. This may involve working alongside staff or other agencies. Urgent action will be required to ensure that children, young people are protected and their needs met.

APPENDIX III

THE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

1. **Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK Government in 1991**
<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>
2. **The Age of Legal Capacity (Scotland) Act 1991**
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1991/Ukpga_19910050_en_1.htm
3. **The Police Act 1997 (Part V Relating to Disclosure), Protection of The Children (Scotland) Act 2003 and The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Scotland) Regulations 2006**

Police Act 1997 –
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1997/1997050.htm>

The Police Act 1997 (Criminal Records) (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (No.96)
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2006/ssi_20060096_en.pdf

Disclosure Scotland –
<http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk/>

The Central Registered Body in Scotland (CRBS) –
<http://www.crbs.org.uk/>

Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003 -
www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/20030005.htm
4. **The Children (Scotland) Act 1995**
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/Ukpga_19950036_en_1.htm
5. **The Arrangements to Look After Children (Scotland) Regulations 1996**
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si1996/Uksi_19963262_en_1.htm
6. **The Data Protection Act 1998**
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/19980029.htm>
7. **European Convention on Human Rights**

Human Rights Act 1998 -
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/19980042.htm>

Scotland Act 1998 –
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/19980046.htm>

8. **The Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001**
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2001/20010008.htm>
9. **The Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002**
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2002/20020013.htm>

Scottish Information Commissioner –
<http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/>
10. **The Education (Disability Strategies and Pupils' Educational Records) (Scotland) Act 2002 and The Pupils' Educational Records (Scotland) Regulations 2003**

The 2002 Act -
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2002/asp_20020012_en.pdf

The 2003 Regulations -
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2003/ssi_20030581_en.pdf
11. **The Sexual Offences Act 2003**
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/ukpga_20030042_en.pdf
12. **The Commissioner for Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2003**
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/asp_20030017_en.pdf
13. **The Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003**
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/20030013.htm>
14. **The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003**
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2003/20030007.htm>
15. **The Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004**
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2004/20040008.htm>
16. **The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004**
<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2004/20040004.htm>
17. **The Vulnerable Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2004**
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2004/asp_20040003_en.pdf
18. **The Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005**
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp_20050009_en.pdf
<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/155036/0041656.pdf>

19. The Management of Offenders etc (Scotland) Act 2005
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp_20050014_en.pdf
20. The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation (Scotland) Act 2005
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2005/asp_20050008_en.pdf
21. The Family Law (Scotland) Act 2006
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/asp_20060002_en.pdf
22. The Joint Inspection of Children's Services and Inspection of Social Work Services (Scotland) Act 2006 and The Joint Inspections (Scotland) Regulations 2006
The 2006 Act -
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/acts2006/asp_20060003_en.pdf
The 2006 Regulations –
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/legislation/scotland/ssi2006/ssi_20060263_en.pdf

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